

Special Education Parent Partnership (SEPPC) Meeting minutes

January 19, 2024

1:00 pm - 2:00 pm

The group was welcomed by Melissa Martin, Coordinator of Special Education and introduction of attendees.

Community Education Winter/spring offerings:

Tiffany Clifton introduces new programs for summer, and expands on different types of supports for overall well being for students. Tiffany asked for parent feedback for topics for needs, such as technology, well-being, balance, understanding substance use, and asked for proposals or topics. A parent talked about not utilizing summer camp because of not being able to get into programs because of the capacity. Tiffany noted that feedback and input from the community is always welcome and encouraged to best support the community.

Anita Goman presents on Circle of Friends. This was started twenty-five years ago with one parent who was a special education teacher from Orono, a program sponsored by Orono Community Education and Westonka Community Education. It is meant to provide social, and emotional programs for students after transitioning out of high school. People have been in the program for many years and some are now in their 60s. Examples of Circle of Friends programs are movie nights, game nights, escape room nights, Valentine parties, open gym, bowling night, High School plays, paint nights, picnics, baking, crafts, dinner nights. Most events are \$5 or \$10. Typically during “school year”. There may be some group events in the summer. Some participants bring PCAs or come with friends. It is a great collaborative cooperative between Mound-Westonka and Orono. What helps make this work is the PCAs that

help each other out. This is geared for students that are in Transition and out of that program and beyond. The Community Education Director asked for parents to reach out any time to let them know what they need. They are always looking for community input.

Orono Coalition Overview:

Ali Chorley presents The Orono Coalition. She began four months ago after Orono District received a grant. Her background is Neuropsychology. The focus with this grant is looking at Orono students K-12 and their environment. The niche focus is aimed at a drug free community. Orono schools is one of two school districts that received this grant in the State of Minnesota.

This grant is focused on every community and its uniqueness. The two goals are to increase community collaboration, and reduce and prevent youth substance use. The coalition is called the Orono Coalition which they recently rebranded to avoid confusion. There are twelve sectors of the community at all times. They are trying to create community level change. They will work with children and families. They have been able to use science to know what strategies are beneficial. They have a framework that uses seven data-driven strategies. Ali said she has participated in policy and framework changes in the area of student behavior responses, for example, student suspensions. Alternatives to in-school suspensions and at-home suspensions. She noted that statistically students with IEPs have a higher rate of school suspensions. Continuum of Care showed that females have more struggles with mental health. Students that had IEPs had a higher likelihood of trouble with vaping. One of her goals is to look at the data related to this substance use. It needs more attention and why do these disparities exist? What this looks like is a community focused approach. The next SEPPC meeting will be held on Friday, March 8, 2024.

The mission is with Orono families for Orono families. TOC (The Orono Coalition) will support the well-being of youth by preventing and reducing youth substance while promoting healthy development and connectedness.

- 1) Listen and connect
- 2) Identify the problems in our community that we'd like to address
- 3) Establish coalition structure
- 4) Graduate from National Coalition Academy which is required for the grant

What they know from the community: Low perception of harm of substance use, 30-day alcohol use rates, long term mental, behavioral and emotional problems. Anxiety and depression, access to substances. Culture of acceptance around substance use.

Ms. Chorley shared the data that 30% of 11th graders think that smoking marijuana daily is safe. A parent asked the question about state legalization of marijuana and does that drive a higher community acceptance. There is a low perception of harm. All listening sessions have included information about anxiety.

A parent asked about having more opportunities for parents to understand and learn more about the things that affect their children. Ali talked about the "Ask Ali" program that was held in the Wayzata School District. It was an anonymous format where questions could be submitted. A parent asked about what Orono provides in the way of curriculum and education surrounding substance abuse and mental health. A parent asked about having a private speaker come in surrounding substance abuse.

Emily Bremner Forbes talks about parent involvement and shares contact information and asks if parents would like to share their personal data. It was noted that some parents may not be able to attend in-person. It would be helpful to add a google meet link to all future meetings. The number of parents was also noted and a parent asked about adding more parents. Corinna Graner said that she would look into this. A parent asked about safety and fire drills and how each student would handle these types of events. A parent asked if having someone from LAC advisory would come in and present. Legislative Action committee (LAC) - Orono Action Committee.